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esting, though it must not be ascribed to the actual depression of the spot, but rather to its deficiency in light compared to the Sun's surface. In this case, also, "bad seeing" somewhat interfered with the best results.

Owing to the great size of the spot, it will probably last for more than a revolution of the Sun, and its reappearance at the eastern limb near the end of this month will be awaited with much interest.

A. L. COLTON.

January 20, 1897.

THE GREAT SUN-SPOT OF JANUARY, 1897.

On Friday, January 15th, the large sun-spot, first noticed by Mr. COLTON, was passing out of view over the west limb of the Sun, and it was hoped that a favorable opportunity would thus be presented for determining the relative elevation of umbra and faculæ with respect to the photosphere. I, therefore, watched the spot with the twelve-inch equatorial, diaphragmed down to four inches aperture, using a HERSCHEL prism and a 150-power eye-piece — the highest power the seeing would permit.

At times the principal umbra appeared distinctly depressed, and the faculæ at all times seemed elevated above the average surface level; but the seeing was at no time good enough to make it certain that this was not merely the effect of irradiation. The spot was under observation from $10^h\ 50^m$ A. M. to $2^h\ 30^m$ P. M.

R. G. AITKEN.

January 19, 1897.

THE HELIOCENTRIC THEORY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE IN 1669.*

"After dinner his highness (Grand Duke COSMO III of Florence) desirous to gratify the Vice-Chancellor (of the University of Cambridge), who entreated him to honor the academy with his presence, went thither with his attendants, followed by the Vice-Chancellor and the heads of the University. In the principal hall, into which his highness was introduced, a short Latin oration was made by one of the Professors, which, being pronounced in the same manner as that which was spoken in the morning, was but little understood. And afterward his highness was present at different questions which were propounded for disputation and strenuously opposed by Professors and Masters of Arts. De methodo philosophandi in experimentis fundata, et *Contra Systema Copernicanum.*"—From Travels of COSMO the Third, Grand Duke of Tuscany, through England, during the reign of King CHARLES the Second (1669), (translated from the Italian manuscript by Count MAGALOTTI in the Laurentian library at Florence. London, 1821, pp. 224, 225.)

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* One hundred and twenty-six years after the death of COPERNICUS.

HONOR CONFERRED ON PROFESSOR BARNARD.

The Royal Astronomical Society of London has awarded its gold medal of the present year to Professor BARNARD for his astronomical discoveries and observations.

PRICES OF REFLECTING TELESCOPES.

From an article in the *Strand Magazine* for October, 1896 (an interview with Sir HOWARD GRUBB, F. R. S.), it appears that the original cost of Lord ROSSE'S six-foot reflector was about £12,000, of the four-foot Melbourne reflector about £4600, and that the estimated cost of a ten-foot reflector of eighty feet focus is £33,000.

A BRILLIANT METEOR.

[Extract from a private letter by WM. S. MOSES.]

"This evening (December 31, 1896) at 6^h 7^m P. S. T., I observed a brilliant meteor. It appeared at ϵ *Tauri* and traveled in a southwest course, expiring at ι *Ceti.* It moved very slowly, being visible, I think, three seconds. Its train was dazzling white and cast a distinct shadow of the trees which intercepted its light. The upper and lower edges of the train were bluish in color. The head was scintillating. It did not burst, nor did I hear an explosion. I happened to be looking at *Mars* and saw it from beginning to end. It did not appear to be far distant. As I took my chart and plotted its course within three minutes after it disappeared, I think I am reasonably correct. It was the finest meteor I ever saw. Accompanying I give a sketch of it."*

LONE MOUNTAIN OBSERVATORY,
San Francisco, Cal.

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* The sketch is here omitted.